

# Spot the difference

## Learn about:

- Male and female reproductive systems
- Infertility

## Why reproduce?

### Do you remember?

The wind and insects carry pollen from one flower to another so that the flower can make seeds and the seeds grow into new plants.

Just like plants, animals need to reproduce or they will die out. Giant pandas are becoming very rare in the wild and zoos all over the world are trying to breed them so that they will not become extinct.

## More of the same

Most animals need a male and a female to reproduce. Humans have children that grow into adults. The bodies of men and women are different so that they can produce children. Men have a male reproductive system and women have a female reproductive system.

Men produce sex cells called **sperm**, and women produce sex cells called **eggs**. To make a baby, a sperm and an egg must join together.

**a** What is the first stage in making a baby?

## Male reproductive system

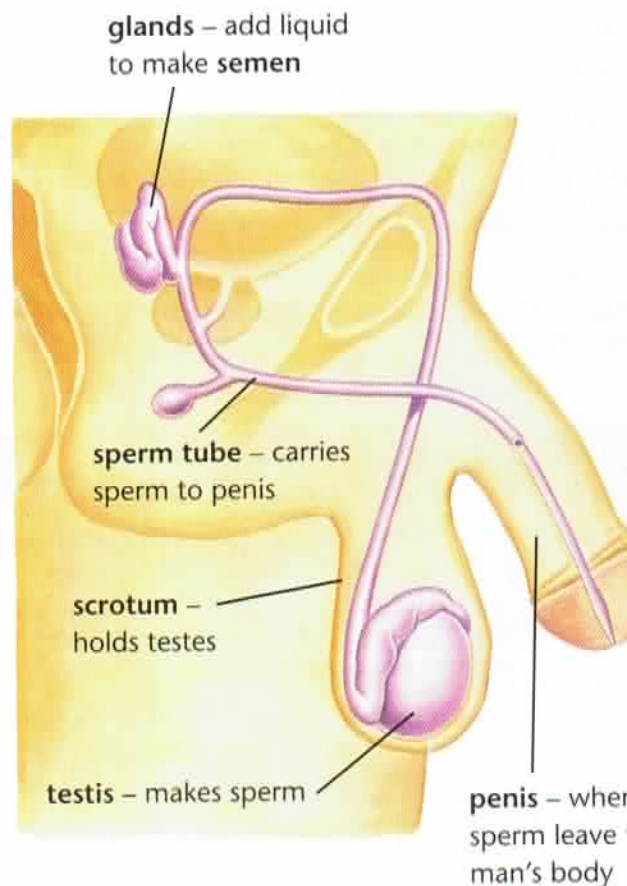
The picture shows the male reproductive system. It is shown from the side.

Sperm are made in the **testes**. There are two of these (one on its own is called a **testis**). The testes produce millions of sperm every day.

The testes are in a special bag of skin called the **scrotum**. This keeps the sperm at just the right temperature. When it is cold, the scrotum gets tighter to keep the testes close to the body and so keep them warm. When it is warm, the scrotum gets looser to move the testes away from the body and so keep cool.

When the sperm leave the testes, they pass along a tube called the **sperm tube**. This carries the sperm to the penis. On the way the sperm pass two **glands**. These glands add a liquid to the sperm. The sperm and liquid together are called **semen**.

Eventually the sperm pass through the **penis**. This is where they leave the man's body.

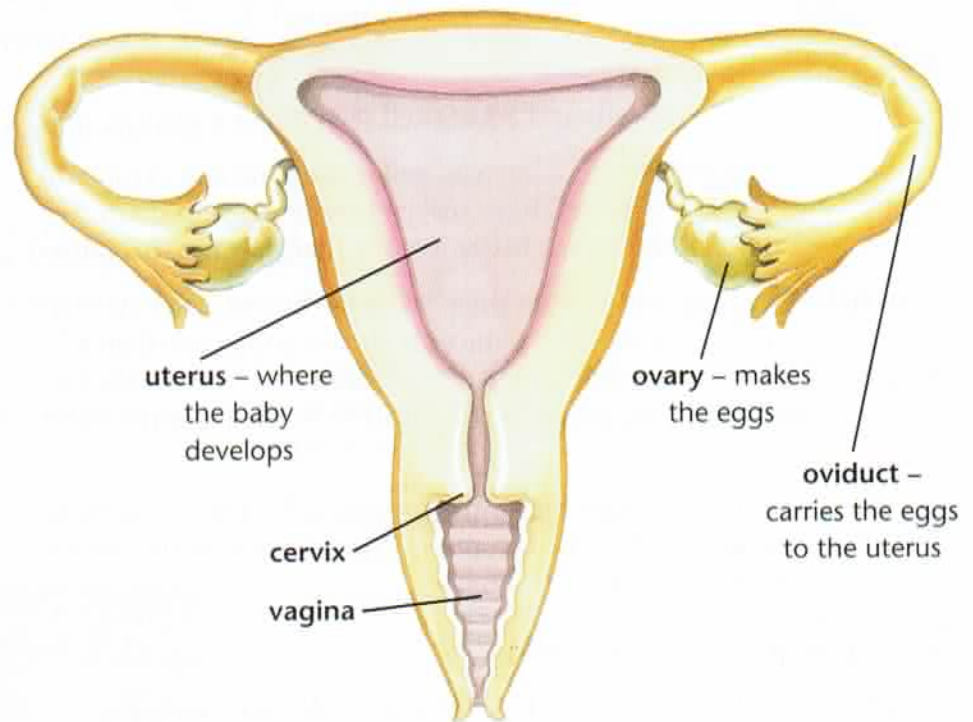


## Female reproductive system

The picture shows the female reproductive system. It is shown from the front.

The eggs are made in the **ovaries**. There are two ovaries, one on each side. Once a month an egg leaves one of the ovaries and passes along the **oviduct** (egg tube). This takes a few days. The egg and sperm may meet in the oviduct.

The **uterus** (womb) is where the baby develops. The opening of the uterus is called the **cervix**. This is a ring of muscle that can open quite wide to let the baby out through the **vagina** when it is ready to be born.



## Infertility

Some couples cannot have a baby naturally. This is called **infertility**.

Often women have a blocked oviduct that prevents the sperm meeting the egg. This blockage can often be removed by surgery.

But sometimes women may release eggs less frequently than once a month. They can be given drugs that make them release lots of eggs in one go. Then there is more chance of a sperm meeting one of the eggs. If more than one egg is fertilised, the woman can be pregnant with five, six or even seven babies!

Some men have a low sperm count. They produce fewer sperm than other men and so there is less chance of a sperm meeting an egg.

## Questions

- Where are  
a sperm      b eggs  
made?
- What happens in the uterus? Why is the cervix made of muscle?
- Give three differences between the male and female reproductive systems.
- Describe two reasons why a woman might have difficulty becoming pregnant. Suggest what might be done to help her.
- Explain a frequent cause of male infertility. Suggest a way of overcoming this problem.

## For your notes:

- Just like plants, animals need to reproduce or they will die out. To do this they have male and female parts.
- Men make **sperm** in the **testes**. The sperm pass along the **sperm tube** and out of the **penis**.
- Women make **eggs** in the **ovaries**. The eggs pass along the **oviduct** to the **uterus**.
- Infertility** is when a couple cannot have a baby naturally.